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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 000134

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [GV](#)

SUBJECT: GUINEA: NEXT MOVES

REF: A. A) CONAKRY 120

[1](#)B. B) CONAKRY 122

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Kent C. Brokenshire for Reason  
1.4 B/D

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The International Contact Group's restrained message to the government of Guinea urging elections and a return to civilian rule is reportedly being interpreted by the ruling CNDD as tacit international approval of the junta. Embassy Conakry believes the Contact Group will remain ineffective and the democratic process stalled so long as the Group shies away from delivering a strong and unambiguous message pressing the junta for timely elections and a return to civilian rule. Post believes additional pressure needs to be brought to bear on the EU, ECOWAS, AU and other organizations comprising the Contact Group, urging a more robust approach. In addition, to strengthen U.S. credibility as a supporter of elections in Guinea, post requests the reallocation of nearly \$7.1 million in USAID development assistance to support legislative and presidential elections. Reallocation of these funds with appropriate conditionality benchmarks would undercut likely GoG attempts to delay elections for lack of funding. End Summary

[1](#)2. (C) Between February 16 and 17 the International Contact Group for Guinea (ICG-G) visited Conakry and met with key political players including Moussa Dadis Camara, President of the ruling CNDD junta (Ref A). The broad purpose of the visit was to press for timely elections and a transition to civilian rule. As Ref A noted, the messages delivered on behalf of the delegation by its two cochairmen were cautious and accommodating, and consisted of compilations of the many conversations they had had with interlocutors. These messages were also apparently ineffective.

[1](#)3. (C) Recent press reports indicate that the Guinea's ruling CNDD is taking the tone of the ICG-G's statement as an indication of the international community's "favorable stand in the current political development in the country." Other players such as the IMF (Ref B) and UNDP are also soft-pedaling the regime, sending a mixed message the CNDD is only too eager to interpret as tacit approval.

[1](#)4. (C) We are concerned that unless the CNDD gets a strong and clear message from the broader international community - not just the USG - urging it to set and adhere to a timely election date, the country will slouch toward entrenched military rule. We are equally concerned that the longer the CNDD clings to power, the more difficult it will be to maintain an effective multilateral front to press for democratic reform. Without the timely establishment of an acceptable election date or other positive development, individual nations and organizations comprising the ICG-G may mellow in their resolve, and eventually lean toward a more politically accommodating or economically lucrative bilateral approach.

[1](#)5. (C) Efforts in early February by Embassy Conakry to muster international partners for a strong joint demarche to press the CNDD to move toward elections came to naught after EU countries backed out of the initiative under instructions from Brussels. The EU withdrew claiming the ICG-G would

deliver essentially the same message. With the ICG-G scheduled to return to Conakry in mid March, conditions here are not favorable to rejuvenate robust multilateral action from locally-based missions and organizations to keep pressure on the CNDD to set an election date.

¶16. (C) Embassy Conakry believes the best option for effective positive change in Guinea is for the Department to approach key organizations within the ICG-G (AU, EU, ECOWAS) and urge a firmer, less ambiguous approach in dealing with the CNDD. We also suggest the Department consider approaching the World Bank and particularly the IMF in order to urge these organizations to make clear to the CNDD that HIPC completion will not take place before elections unfold. According to the resident representatives of these organizations in Conakry, this is already policy (Ref B). However, they have not articulated it in clear form to the CNDD with the result that the junta continues to labor under the illusion that financial relief is on the horizon.

¶17. (C) Two internal obstacles present themselves. First, the CNDD remains popular with the people of Guinea, many of whom are pleased to be rid of Conte and delighted to see the junta make inroads against entrenched corruption and drug trafficking. Second, until recently, civil society, political parties and the general population have been slow to raise their voices for elections and a return to civilian rule. In this respect, the international community - even the accommodating ICG-G - was ahead of the people in calling for elections in 2009. Political parties and civil society, however, have now made clear they will not remain silent at the prospects of another military dictatorship. However, their lack of cohesiveness may ultimately undermine their effectiveness as a potential counterweight to the CNDD.

¶18. (C) Given the historic opportunity at hand, we believe a firm line is the most effective expedient to move Guinea toward elections. However, we also acknowledge that unless the USG is successful in persuading other key players to push for real results on the ground in Guinea, we risk isolating ourselves. We are prepared to continue our vigorous advocacy for democracy. At the same time, without broader international support, standing alone is unlikely to get positive results. Our locally-based partners are clearly taking direction from their headquarters. We need those headquarters to start calling for more forceful multilateral action. Department engagement with key partners could help jump-start such a strategy.

¶19. (U) At the same time, in order to strengthen our credibility and standing as a supporter of elections, post proposes the reallocation of \$7.093 million in FY 2009 development assistance (DA) funds. (Septel will cover the particulars of this proposal.) Disbursement of these funds, with appropriate conditionality, would help fill an estimated election shortfall of \$22.82 million and reinforce our overarching policy of promoting democracy. Under current financial pressures, made ever worse by the world-wide recession and delay in HIPC, the GoG will be hard-pressed to find the means to pay its share for elections. It will likely use the shortfall as an excuse for further delays. The allocation of DA funding will partly undercut anticipated GoG arguments that it cannot afford the elections Guinea needs to bring about democratic civilian rule. It will also give much needed encouragement to political parties and civil society.

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